

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose made from a uniform material for connecting a teat cup to a multiway valve in an automatic milking plant, comprising:

a first end portion for connection to a connecting neck of the teat cup;

a second end portion for connection to a connecting neck of the multiway valve, and;

a centre piece having a substantially constant interior diameter, and including spaced-apart reinforcement elements which at least partially enclose a circumference of a predetermined area of the centre piece, the centre piece having a greater flexibility than said first and second end portions, said flexibility increasing towards a middle of the centre piece.

2-4. Cancelled

5. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

the distance between two respective neighbouring reinforcement elements decreases from the middle of the centre piece towards the respective first and second end portions.

6. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

the reinforcement elements are implemented as spaced-apart elevations of material enclosing the circumference of the centre piece at least partially.

7. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 6, wherein

a wall thickness of each of said spaced-apart elevations of material exceeds a wall thickness in an area located between two adjacent spaced-apart elevations of material.

8. Cancelled

9. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

the first and second end portions each have formed thereon a reinforcement element.

10. (Original) A flexible milk hose according to claim 9, wherein

the reinforcement elements each comprise enlarged portions of material whose wall thickness exceeds the wall thickness of the respective residual area of the first and second end portions.

11. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

the hose consists, at least partially, of a permanently chemically passive and stable material which will not give off secretions to the milk during the milking operation.

12. (Original) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

a wall thickness of the centre piece decreases from the first and second end portions towards the middle of said centre piece.

13. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

a wall thickness of the reinforcement elements is smaller in the area of the middle of the centre piece than the wall thickness of the reinforcement elements arranged in areas of the centre piece closest to each end portion.

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and

14. (Original) A flexible milk hose according to claim 13, wherein

the wall thickness of the reinforcement elements decreases continuously towards the middle of the centre piece.

15. (Previously Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein

a wall thickness of an intermediate area between two neighbouring reinforcement elements in the area of the middle of the centre piece is smaller than the wall thickness of the intermediate area of the reinforcement elements arranged in areas of said centre piece closest to each end portion.

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 16. (Original) A flexible milk hose according to claim 15, wherein

the wall thickness of the intermediate areas decreases continuously towards the middle of said centre piece.

17. (Previously Added) A milk hose for connecting a teat cup to a multiway valve in an automatic milking plant, said hose comprising a first end portion configured for connection to a connecting neck of the teat cup, a second end portion configured for connection to a connecting neck of the multiway valve, and a centre piece disposed between said first and second end portions and having an interior diameter which is substantially constant, said centre piece including a plurality of axially spaced reinforcement elements which extend circumferentially along an exterior of said centre piece and permit said centre piece to have a greater flexibility than said first and second end portions.

18. (Currently Amended) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the distance between adjacent ~~pairs of~~ reinforcement elements decreases from the middle of the centre piece towards the respective first and second end portions.

19. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the reinforcement elements are defined by spaced-apart elevations which enclose the circumference of the centre piece.

20. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 19, wherein a wall thickness of each of said elevations exceeds a wall thickness in an area located between two adjacent elevations.

21. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the first and second end portions each define thereon a reinforcement element.

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22. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 21, wherein the reinforcement elements of said end portions each have a wall thickness which exceeds the wall thickness of the first and second end portions.

23. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the centre piece comprises a permanently chemically passive and stable material which will not give off secretions to the milk during the milking operation.

24. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein a wall thickness of the centre piece decreases in a direction from the first and second end portions towards a middle of said centre piece.

25. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein a wall thickness of the reinforcement elements is smaller in the area of a middle of the centre piece than a wall thickness of the reinforcement elements disposed adjacent the end portions.

26. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 25, wherein the wall thickness of the reinforcement elements decreases continuously from the end portions towards the middle of the centre piece.

27. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein a wall thickness of an intermediate area between two adjacent reinforcement elements disposed adjacent a middle of the centre piece is smaller than a wall thickness of an intermediate area between two reinforcement elements disposed adjacent the respective end portions.

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28. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 27, wherein the wall thickness of the intermediate areas decreases continuously in a direction from the first and second end portions towards the middle of said centre piece.

29. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the milk hose is made of plastic.

30. (Previously Added) A milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the milk hose is adapted to be stretched and compressed in the longitudinal direction.

31. (Previously Added) A flexible milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the milk hose is made of plastic.

32. (Previously Added) A milk hose according to claim 1, wherein the milk hose is adapted to be stretched and compressed in the longitudinal direction.

33. (New) A flexible milk hose according to claim 17, wherein the flexibility of said centre piece increases towards a middle of said centre piece.
